

Country of Origin Labeling Program
Room 2092-S
Agricultural Marketing Service,
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RE: Docket No. LS-03-04

I am writing to urge you to strengthen the final interim rules for the country of origin labeling for fish and shellfish, so the law is implemented as Congress intended. As a consumer, I have the right to know where my seafood comes from so I can make an informed decision as to what seafood to buy.

Some seafood, such as shrimp, is farmed with chemicals that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has banned in the United States. Some chemicals, such as chloramphenicol and nitrofurans, are used around the world to raise shrimp in coastal farms for exportation to the U.S. Chloramphenicol is linked to human aplastic anemia, intestinal problems, and neurological reactions; while nitrofurans have been found to be carcinogenic. Recent scientific studies have determined that farm raised salmon contains contaminants harmful to human health. Given these concerns, I have the right to know what I am eating and to make an informed choice.

Specifically, I urge you to narrow the rule's definition of processed foods, to insure that canned seafood, breaded and cooked products are labeled with their country of origin and method of production. According to your interim final rule, 50% of the shrimp sold in the United States is breaded, but according to the USDA definition, breaded shrimp would be exempt from labeling. Shrimp is the number one seafood choice in the United States, and it is unacceptable that half of it be exempt from country of origin labeling.

I also urge you to require small businesses to comply with the law, since up to 90% of seafood is sold in small business, according to the USDA research. Lastly, I urge you to develop a comprehensive enforcement and penalty system that would deter companies from not complying with the law.

As a consumer, as a member of the public, I have the right to know where all of my seafood comes from and if it is farm raised or wild caught.

Sincerely,

Laura Rogers